

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) and U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) today called on Major League Baseball (MLB) and the MLB Players Association to reverse their decision to no longer participate in the annual National Baseball Hall of Fame Game at Doubleday Field in Cooperstown, NY after this season.

“In our effort to accommodate the players we must not forget what has made Major League Baseball the American pastime for over a century – supportive fans from every corner of the country,” wrote Arcuri and Clinton in their letter to MLB Commissioner Bud Selig and MLP Players Association Executive Director Donald Fehr. “We are hopeful that Major League Baseball and the MLB Players Association will seriously consider the long-term consequences this decision will have on the game of baseball, and reverse your decision.”

Cooperstown native Kristian Connolly, creator of savethefamegame.com, an online grassroots organization dedicated to keeping the 70-year Baseball Hall of Fame Game tradition alive said, “Having Congressman Arcuri and Senator Clinton on the side of those who love baseball, value tradition and care deeply about local communities and economies will only help to intensify the grassroots effort of savethefamegame.com. I thank Rep. Arcuri and Senator Clinton for standing with us, and know that their support is essential in helping us move toward affecting the change we are seeking, and keeping an almost 70-year tradition alive in the home of baseball.”

In their letter, Arcuri and Clinton highlighted the unique nature of the Hall of Fame Game and the important role the annual event plays in the local economy.

“Major League Baseball’s decision will also have far-reaching negative implications on the local economy of the Cooperstown area. Each year, roughly 10,000 fans arrive in Cooperstown for a glimpse of some of baseball’s greats, and while doing so, eat in local restaurants, stay in local hotels and purchase baseball memorabilia from local shops. In addition, many local schools and charities rely on the generosity of Hall of Fame Game attendees to raise funds for many vital community initiatives.”

This afternoon, Arcuri met with Dale Petroskey, President of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown to discuss steps being taken to maintain this historic event.

The text of the letter is attached below:

February 20, 2008

Mr. Allan H. (Bud) Selig, Commissioner
Major League Baseball
Association
777 East Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 3060
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Mr. Donald Fehr, Executive Director
Major League Baseball Players

12 East 49th Street
24th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Commissioner Selig and Mr. Fehr:

As members of Congress who represent the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Doubleday Field, we are writing to express our strong disapproval of Major League Baseball's decision to no longer participate in the National Baseball Hall of Fame Game after this season.

For nearly 70 years, the Hall of Fame Game has brought avid baseball fans from across the globe to the Village of Cooperstown, NY, for the opportunity to step back in time and enjoy the historic nature of the game.

We were very disheartened to learn that Major League Baseball's decision is based on the "logistical complexities" of finding teams to participate each year. It seems clear to us that with ticket prices, player salaries and concession prices at record highs, Major League Baseball and the MLB Players Association could work together to address any logistical difficulties in order to continue participating in the Hall of Fame Game.

As you know, the Hall of Fame Game is the one opportunity fans and players have each year to forget about statistics and standings, and enjoy the game of baseball for its historic and aesthetic value.

Major League Baseball's decision will also have far-reaching negative implications on the local economy of the Cooperstown area. Each year, roughly 10,000 fans arrive in Cooperstown for a glimpse of some of baseball's greats, and while doing so, eat in local restaurants, stay in local hotels and purchase baseball memorabilia from local shops. In addition, many local schools and charities rely on the generosity of Hall of Fame Game attendees to raise funds for many vital community initiatives.

In our effort to accommodate the players we must not forget what has made Major League Baseball the American pastime for over a century – supportive fans from every corner of the country. The Hall of Fame game is symbolic of Major League Baseball's connection to rural communities like Cooperstown with fans who do not have the luxury of living close to a big league park or have the financial means for admission. We are hopeful that Major League Baseball and the MLB Players Association will seriously consider the long-term consequences this decision will have on the game of baseball, and reverse your decision. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. ARCURI

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

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